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## ***SENATOR CARDIN CALLS FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN MASS TRANSIT A NATIONAL PRIORITY***

Washington, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, today commended the U.S. PIRG Education Fund for its thorough examination of modern public transportation mass transit and its impact on our nation's economy and the environment.

"This report reinforces my belief that federal investment in public transportation should be a national priority, **said Senator Cardin**. "Our nation receives extraordinary public benefit from mass transportation systems," said Senator Cardin. "They take thousands of cars off our congested highways. They take tons of pollutants out of the air we breathe. They move people efficiently into and out of our most important commercial centers."

"The economic and environmental health of the National Capital Region, Maryland and the Federal Government are interconnected with the growth of our public transportation systems like Metro, MARC and Amtrak," said Senator Cardin.

"The *Washington Metropolitan Area Transit System*, which includes the second largest rail system in the country, helps to take 580,000 cars off our local roads each weekday. It also saves 75 million gallons of gasoline and eliminates one million tons of dangerous greenhouse gases each year. And since nearly half of Metrorail's rush hour passengers are federal employees," said Senator Cardin, "... the Federal Government has a special responsibility to invest in its infrastructure and revitalization."

*Amtrak* operates approximately 90 trains daily in Maryland, mostly on the Amtrak-owned Northeast Corridor through Baltimore Penn Station and New Carrollton. More than 1.7 million passengers board and disembark at Maryland's Amtrak stations every year.

The MARC Penn, Camden and Brunswick commuter train lines serve a daily ridership in excess of 30,000 people in eight Maryland counties. Recent growth in ridership is over six percent annually.

Metro, Amtrak and MARC are major components of a national transit system. In 2005, public transportation use in the U.S. directly prevented the emission of 6.9 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide and 400,000 metric tonnes of other types of greenhouse gases. These emission savings are from transit riders not driving and reduced congestion in urban areas as a result of transit. While these savings are valuable, transit can do even more.

As a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator Cardin authored an amendment to the ***Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act*** that would allocate 1% of the carbon allowance auction proceeds for exclusive use in meeting the country's mass transit needs. The value of the credits will be set through a market-driven cap-and-trade system. Early estimates are that the Cardin Transit Provision will put \$46.5 billion into mass transit programs across the country between 2012 and 2050.

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